

Gospel Truth #9

“The Bible so clearly teaches that righteousness is by faith. Therefore the only element that God's people need in order to prepare for the second coming of Christ is genuine faith. The message the world needs to hear is the truth of righteousness by faith in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary—“the third angel's message in verity.” Faith is understood in its true biblical sense—a heart appreciation of the agape of Christ.”

Robert J. Wieland

What the Bible Teaches - Truth #9

- a) "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Galatians 5:6).
- b) "By grace are ye saved through faith." It's "with the heart" that we believe (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:10).
- c) God's people in the end of time will be noted for having such faith (Revelation 14:12).
- d) Such faith is an experience that constantly grows and develops (Romans 1:16, 17).
- e) The constant prayer of those who have faith is, "Help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:23, 24).
- f) Saving faith is so closely related to agape that it is a response to it (John 3:16; Ephesians 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 5).
- g) Agape is "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit," brought from heaven vertically; immediately it flows out horizontally to our fellow men. What flows back to God is faith (Romans 5:5; Colossians 1:4).
- h) Translation at the coming of Christ will be the final experience of mature faith (Hebrews 11:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).
- i) How can we understand "righteousness by faith" unless we understand what "faith" is?

A.T. Jones Believed and Taught that . . .

"Faith is 'the gift of God' (Ephesians 2:8); and that it is given to everybody is plainly stated in the Scriptures: 'God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith' (Romans 12:3). This measure of faith which 'God hath dealt to every man' is the capital with which God endows and starts 'every man that cometh into the world;' and every man is expected to trade upon this capital—cultivate it—to the salvation of his soul.

"There is no danger of ever lessening this capital when it is used: as certainly as it is used at all, it will increase, it will grow exceedingly. And as certainly as it grows, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, of the Lord, are assured to the full salvation of the soul" (Lessons on Faith, pp. 21, 22).

Unbelief Frustrates the Grace of God

"Can every believer have grace enough to keep him free from sinning? —Yes. Indeed, everybody in the world can have enough to keep him from sinning. Enough is given; and it is given for this purpose. If any one does not have it, it is not because enough has not been given. . . .

"It is given also 'for the perfecting of the saints.' The object of it is to bring each one to perfection in Christ Jesus—to the perfection too, that is fully up to God's standard; for it is given for the building up of the body of Christ, 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' . . .

"If sin yet has dominion over any one, where lies the fault? —Clearly it lies only in this, that he will not allow the grace to do for him and in him that which it is given to do. By unbelief he frustrates the grace of God. . . .

"But the power of God is "unto salvation to every one that believeth. Unbelief frustrates the grace of God. Many believe and receive the grace of God for the salvation from sins that are past, but are content with that, and do not give it the same place in the soul, to reign against the power of sin, that they did to save from sins of the past. This, too, is but another phase of unbelief. So as to the one great final object of grace—the perfection of the life in the likeness of Christ, they do practically receive the grace of God in vain" (ibid., pp. 86-88).

"We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. . . . It is the mind of Christ by which we may comprehend, investigate, and revel in, the deep things of God which He reached down and brings forth to our understanding and sets them before us in their plainness. That is what we must have, in order to have the presence of Christ, in order to have the righteousness of Christ, in order that we may have the latter rain, in order that we may give the loud cry" (General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 256).

"Let us thank the Lord that He is dealing with us still, to save us from our errors, to save us from our dangers, to keep us back from wrong courses, and to pour upon us the latter rain, that we may be translated. That is what the [1888] message means—translation—to you and me. Brethren, let us receive it with all the heart, and thank God for it" (General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 185).

"The Lord cannot keep us from sinning when we do not believe Him" (ibid., p. 207).

"The heart that rests most fully upon Christ will be most earnest and active in labor for Him. That is what real faith is. That is faith that will bring to you the outpouring of the latter rain, . . . to prepare us for the loud cry and the carrying of the third angel's message in the only way in which it can be carried from this Conference" (ibid., p. 302).

Waggoner Taught . . .

"The argument, concisely stated, is this: 1. Faith in God is begotten by a knowledge of His power [agape]; to distrust Him implies ignorance of His ability to perform His promises; our faith in Him must be in proportion to our real knowledge of His power. 2. An intelligent contemplation of God's creation gives us a true conception of His power; for His eternal power and Godhead are understood by the things which He has made. 3. It is faith that gives victory (1 John 5:4); therefore, since faith comes by learning the power of God, from His word and from the things that He has made, we gain the victory, or triumph through the works of His hands. The Sabbath, therefore, which is the memorial of creation, is, if properly observed, a source of the Christian's greatest reinforcement in battle" (Christ and His Righteousness, pp. 36, 37).

"Surely all doubt as to acceptance with God ought to be set at rest. But it is not. The evil heart of unbelief still suggests doubts. 'I believe all this, but—.' There, stop right there; if you believed you wouldn't say 'but.' When people add 'but' to the statement that they believe, they really mean, 'I believe, but I don't believe.' But you continue: 'Perhaps you are right, but hear me out. What I was going to say is, I believe the Scripture statements that you have quoted, but the Bible says that if we are children of God we shall have the witness of the Spirit, and will have the witness in ourselves; and I don't feel any such witness, therefore I can't believe that I am Christ's. I believe His word, but I haven't the witness.' . . .

"Now as to your believing His words, yet doubting if He accepts you, because you don't feel the witness in your heart, I still insist that you don't believe" (ibid., pp. 74, 75).

Ellen White Was in Clear Support of This Truth

"There are old, yet new truths still to be added to the treasures of our knowledge. We do not understand or exercise faith as we should. . . . We are not called to worship and serve God by the use of the means employed in former years. God requires higher service now than ever before. He requires the improvement of the heavenly gifts. He has brought us into a position where we need higher and better things than have ever been needed before" (Review and Herald, February 25, 1890).

"Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity" (Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 473).

"We have been hearing His voice more distinctly in the message that has been going for the last two years [1888-1890], declaring unto us the Father's name. . . . O that we might gather up our forces of faith, and plant our feet on the rock Christ Jesus! You should believe that He will keep you from falling. The reason why you do not have more faith in the promises of God, is that your minds are separated from God, and the enemy meant it should be so. He has cast his shadow between us and our Saviour, that we may not discern what Christ is to us, or what He may be. The enemy does not desire us to understand what a comfort we shall find in Christ. We have only just begun to get a little glimmering of what faith is . . . For nearly two years we have been urging the people to come up and accept the light and the truth concerning the righteousness of

Christ [the 1888 message], and they do not know whether to come and take hold of this precious truth or not. . . . Shall we not arise and get out of this position of unbelief?" (Review and Herald, March 11, 1890).

"No one has said that we shall find perfection in any man's investigations, but this I do know, that our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and for kindred truths" (ibid., March 25, 1890).